

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend paragraph number [00125] as follows:

[00125] Next, an RTP step is used to sinter the refractory metal layer. The sintering step is performed in a nitrogen-(N₂-) rich environment at a temperature ranging from about 500°C to ~~about 650°C.~~ about 650°C. The preferred exposure time ranges between about 10 seconds to about 20 seconds.